

# Chapter 70.28 RCW

## Control of Tuberculosis

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RCW 70.28.005 - Health officials, broad powers to protect public health.

(1) Tuberculosis has been and continues to be a threat to the public's health in the state of Washington.

(2) While it is important to respect the rights of individuals, the legitimate public interest in protecting the public health and welfare from the spread of a deadly infectious disease outweighs incidental curtailment of individual rights that may occur in implementing effective testing, treatment, and infection control strategies.

(3) To protect the public's health, it is the intent of the legislature that local health officials provide culturally sensitive and medically appropriate early diagnosis, treatment, education, and follow-up to prevent tuberculosis. Further, it is imperative that public health officials and their staff have the necessary authority and discretion to take actions as are necessary to protect the health and welfare of the public, subject to the constitutional protection required under the federal and state constitutions. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed as in any way limiting the broad powers of health officials to act as necessary to protect the public health.

[1994 c 145 § 1.]

RCW 70.28.008 - Definitions.

The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

(1) "Department" means the department of health;

(2) "Secretary" means the secretary of the department of health or his or her designee;

(3) "Tuberculosis control" refers to the procedures administered in the counties for the control, prevention, and treatment of tuberculosis.

[1999 c 172 § 7; 1991 c 3 § 330; 1983 c 3 § 171; 1971 ex.s. c 277 § 15. Formerly RCW 70.33.010.]

### NOTES:

**Finding -- Severability -- 1999 c 172:** See notes following RCW 70.28.010.

## RCW 70.28.010 - Health care providers required to report cases.

All practicing health care providers in the state are hereby required to report to the local health department cases of every person having tuberculosis who has been attended by, or who has come under the observation of, the health care provider within one day thereof.

[1999 c 172 § 2; 1996 c 209 § 1; 1967 c 54 § 1; 1899 c 71 § 1; RRS § 6109.]

### NOTES:

**Finding -- 1999 c 172:** "The legislature finds that current statutes relating to the reporting, treatment, and payment for tuberculosis are outdated, and not in concert with current clinical practice and tuberculosis care management. Updating reporting requirements for local health departments will benefit providers, local health, and individuals requiring treatment for tuberculosis." [1999 c 172 § 1.]

**Severability -- 1999 c 172:** "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1999 c 172 § 13.]

**Severability -- 1967 c 54:** "If any provision of this act, or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act, or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1967 c 54 § 20.]

## RCW 70.28.020 - Record of reports.

All local health departments in this state are hereby required to receive and keep a record, for a period of ten years from the date of the report, of the reports required by RCW 70.28.010 to be made to them; such records shall not be open to public inspection, but shall be submitted to the proper inspection of other local health departments and of the department of health alone, and such records shall not be published nor made public.

[1999 c 172 § 3; 1967 c 54 § 2; 1899 c 71 § 2; RRS § 6110.]

### NOTES:

**Finding -- Severability -- 1999 c 172:** See notes following RCW 70.28.010.

## RCW 70.28.025 - Secretary's administrative responsibility -- Scope.

The secretary shall have responsibility for establishing standards for the control, prevention, and treatment of tuberculosis and hospitals approved to treat tuberculosis in the state operated under this chapter and chapter 70.30 RCW and for providing, either directly or through agreement, contract, or purchase, appropriate facilities and services for persons who are, or may be suffering from tuberculosis except as otherwise provided by RCW 70.30.061 or this section.

Under that responsibility, the secretary shall have the following powers and duties:

(1) To develop and enter into such agreements, contracts, or purchase arrangements with counties and public and private agencies or institutions to provide for hospitalization, nursing home, or other appropriate facilities and services, including laboratory services, for persons who are or may be suffering from tuberculosis;

(2) Adopt such rules as are necessary to assure effective patient care and treatment of tuberculosis.

[1999 c 172 § 8; 1983 c 3 § 172; 1973 1st ex.s. c 213 § 2; 1971 ex.s. c 277 § 16. Formerly RCW 70.33.020.]

#### **NOTES:**

**Finding -- Severability -- 1999 c 172:** See notes following RCW 70.28.010.

RCW 70.28.031 - Powers and duties of health officers.

Each health officer is hereby directed to use every available means to ascertain the existence of, and immediately to investigate, all reported or suspected cases of tuberculosis in the infectious stages within his or her jurisdiction and to ascertain the sources of such infections. In carrying out such investigations, each health officer is hereby invested with full powers of inspection, examination, treatment, and quarantine or isolation of all persons known to be infected with tuberculosis in an infectious stage or persons who have been previously diagnosed as having tuberculosis and who are under medical orders for treatment or periodic follow-up examinations and is hereby directed:

(a) To make such examinations as are deemed necessary of persons reasonably suspected of having tuberculosis in an infectious stage and to isolate and treat or isolate, treat, and quarantine such persons, whenever deemed necessary for the protection of the public health.

(b) To make such examinations as deemed necessary of persons who have been previously diagnosed as having tuberculosis and who are under medical orders for periodic follow-up examinations.

(c) Follow local rules and regulations regarding examinations, treatment, quarantine, or isolation, and all rules, regulations, and orders of the state board and of the department in carrying out such examination, treatment, quarantine, or isolation.

(d) Whenever the health officer shall determine on reasonable grounds that an examination or treatment of any person is necessary for the preservation and protection of the public health, he or she shall make an examination order in writing, setting forth the name of the person to be examined, the time and place of the examination, the treatment, and such other terms and conditions as may be necessary to protect the public health. Nothing contained in this subdivision shall be construed to prevent any person whom the health officer determines should have an examination or treatment for infectious tuberculosis from having such an examination or treatment made by a physician of his or her own choice who is licensed to practice osteopathic medicine and surgery under chapter 18.57 RCW or medicine and surgery under chapter 18.71 RCW under such terms and conditions as the health officer shall determine on reasonable

grounds to be necessary to protect the public health.

(e) Whenever the health officer shall determine that quarantine, treatment, or isolation in a particular case is necessary for the preservation and protection of the public health, he or she shall make an order to that effect in writing, setting forth the name of the person, the period of time during which the order shall remain effective, the place of treatment, isolation, or quarantine, and such other terms and conditions as may be necessary to protect the public health.

(f) Upon the making of an examination, treatment, isolation, or quarantine order as provided in this section, a copy of such order shall be served upon the person named in such order.

(g) Upon the receipt of information that any examination, treatment, quarantine, or isolation order, made and served as herein provided, has been violated, the health officer shall advise the prosecuting attorney of the county in which such violation has occurred, in writing, and shall submit to such prosecuting attorney the information in his or her possession relating to the subject matter of such examination, treatment, isolation, or quarantine order, and of such violation or violations thereof.

(h) Any and all orders authorized under this section shall be made by the health officer or his or her tuberculosis control officer.

(i) Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to abridge the right of any person to rely exclusively on spiritual means alone through prayer to treat tuberculosis in accordance with the tenets and practice of any well-recognized church or religious denomination, nor shall anything in this chapter be deemed to prohibit a person who is inflicted with tuberculosis from being isolated or quarantined in a private place of his own choice, provided, it is approved by the local health officer, and all laws, rules and regulations governing control, sanitation, isolation, and quarantine are complied with.

[1996 c 209 § 2; 1996 c 178 § 21; 1967 c 54 § 4.]

## NOTES:

**Reviser's note:** This section was amended by 1996 c 178 § 21 and by 1996 c 209 § 2, each without reference to the other. Both amendments are incorporated in the publication of this section under RCW 1.12.025(2). For rule of construction, see RCW 1.12.025(1).

**Effective date -- 1996 c 178:** See note following RCW 18.35.110.

RCW 70.28.032 - Due process standards for testing, treating, detaining  
-- Reporting requirements -- Training and scope for skin test  
administration.

(1) The state board of health shall adopt rules establishing the requirements for:

(a) Reporting confirmed or suspected cases of tuberculosis by health care providers and reporting of laboratory results consistent with tuberculosis by medical test sites;

(b) Due process standards for health officers exercising their authority to involuntarily detain, test, treat, or isolate persons with suspected or confirmed tuberculosis under RCW 70.28.031 and 70.05.070 that provide for release from any involuntary detention, testing, treatment, or isolation as soon as the health officer determines the patient no longer represents a risk to the public's health;

(c) Training of persons to perform tuberculosis skin testing and to administer tuberculosis medications.

(2) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, persons trained under subsection (1)(c) of this section may perform skin testing and administer medications if doing so as part of a program established by a state or local health officer to control tuberculosis.

[1996 c 209 § 3; 1994 c 145 § 2.]

RCW 70.28.033 - Treatment, isolation, or examination order of health officer -- Violation -- Penalty.

Inasmuch as the order provided for by RCW 70.28.031 is for the protection of the public health, any person who, after service upon him or her of an order of a health officer directing his or her treatment, isolation, or examination as provided for in RCW 70.28.031, violates or fails to comply with the same or any provision thereof, is guilty of a misdemeanor, and, upon conviction thereof, in addition to any and all other penalties which may be imposed by law upon such conviction, may be ordered by the court confined until such order of such health officer shall have been fully complied with or terminated by such health officer, but not exceeding six months from the date of passing judgment upon such conviction: PROVIDED, That the court, upon suitable assurances that such order of such health officer will be complied with, may place any person convicted of a violation of such order of such health officer upon probation for a period not to exceed two years, upon condition that the said order of said health officer be fully complied with: AND PROVIDED FURTHER, That upon any subsequent violation of such order of such health officer, such probation shall be terminated and confinement as herein provided ordered by the court.

[1996 c 209 § 4; 1967 c 54 § 5.]

RCW 70.28.035 - Order of health officer -- Refusal to obey -- Application for superior court order.

In addition to the proceedings set forth in RCW 70.28.031, where a local health officer has reasonable cause to believe that an individual has tuberculosis as defined in the rules and regulations of the state board of health, and the individual refuses to obey the order of the local health officer to appear for an initial examination or a follow-up examination or an order for treatment, isolation, or quarantine, the health officer may apply to the superior court for an order requiring the individual to comply with the order of the local health officer.

[1996 c 209 § 5; 1967 c 54 § 6.]

RCW 70.28.037 - Superior court order for confinement of individuals having active tuberculosis.

Where it has been determined after an examination as prescribed in this chapter that an individual has active tuberculosis, upon application to the superior court by the local health officer, the superior court shall order the sheriff to transport the individual to a designated facility for isolation, treatment, and care until such time as the local health officer or designee determines that the patient's condition is such that it is safe for the patient to be discharged from the facility.

[1999 c 172 § 4; 1967 c 54 § 7.]

**NOTES:**

**Finding -- Severability -- 1999 c 172:** See notes following RCW 70.28.010.

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NOTES:

**Reviser's note:** Powers and duties of the department of social and health services and the secretary of social and health services transferred to the department of health and the secretary of health. See RCW 43.70.060.